
From: Nejako, Henry (FTA)
To: Steve Barsony; Barr, James (FTA); Bausch, Carl (FTA); Belanger, Marcel (FTA); Centolanzi, Patrick (FTA); Chen, RoyWeiShun (FTA); Chipman, Peter (FTA); Eckmann, Alex (FTA); Flanigon, Mike (FTA); Herre, Susan (FTA); Hodges, Tina (FTA); Jackson, Betty (FTA); Lesh, Matthew (FTA); Manner, Abbe (FTA); Ory, David (FTA); Ossi, Joseph (FTA); Robinson, Bruce (FTA); Steinitz, Timothy (FTA); Stoltzfus, Jarrett (FTA); Wong, Richard (FTA); Zelasko, Elizabeth (FTA); Anderson, Mary (FTA); Baltes, Michael (FTA); Bell, John (FTA); Hynes, Ronald (FRA); Pindiprolu, Venkat (FTA); Wagley, Raj (FTA); Williams, Terrell (FTA); Boenau, Ronald (FTA); Loui, Anthony (FTA); Munoz-Raskin, Ramon (FRA); Riklin, Sherry (FTA)
Sent: 8/28/2009 3:40:08 AM
Subject: FW: Honolulu's EIS, technology and procurements should have been better [Star Bulletin article]

If I were the czar of Oahu ...
By Frank Genadio
Star Bulletin
Aug 27, 2009

In Imperial Russia, directives of the ruler – or czar – were implemented without discussion. Perhaps a local czar could deal with two projects currently in the media: the city's steel wheels on steel rails (SWSR) transit project; and D.R. Horton-Schuler's planned Ho'opili development of 11,750 homes on existing agricultural lands. The former moves on despite local concerns. The latter faces a decision from the Land Use Commission. Lacking a divine right to dictate, I must establish credentials to offer solutions. I am a former member of the Committee for Balanced Transportation and the mayor's Transit Solutions Advisory Committee. I am a current member of the developer's Ho'opili Task Force – although the following might change that status. "Czar Frank" would:

Pause the rail project and order a new environmental impact statement covering all rail technologies. Advise the Federal Transit Administration that the city will still request federal funding in 2011. Advise current SWSR suppliers and construction companies that new proposals will be for a master contract combining an elevated guideway with technology, with bids including 30-year operations and maintenance costs. Advise previous technology suppliers as well as companies developing new urban magnetic levitation (mag-lev) systems that all are welcome to bid. Competition reduces costs, and I anticipate a mag-lev will be selected because of operational and cost advantages.

Negotiate with the Hawaiian Railway Society to refurbish and expand its rail yard in East Kapolei for a maintenance-storage facility along with a railroad museum – at city expense. Building roofs will have photovoltaic panels to supply electricity. A rail system 20-megawatt solar farm will be developed nearby in Kalaeloa.

The rail system will connect the University of Hawaii-Manoa, Waikiki, West Kapolei, Wahiawa and Ewa Beach, and will include express service into downtown with two intermediate stops from West Kapolei and one from Mililani. Because of reduced material costs for the mag-lev guideway, UH-Manoa and Waikiki extensions will be within budget and timelines for the currently planned 20-mile system. For additional financing, the state's 10 percent "rake-off" from the transit surcharge will be eliminated, and the City Council will add another half percent to reach the 1 percent transit requirement).

Concerning Ho'opili, compromise by going "vertical," with the same number of housing units built while preserving some farm acreage. Increase building height limits to at least 350 feet and leave 500 (of the current) 1,500 acres of farms on the fringes, moving through low-rise housing to a city center of high-rise apartment and office buildings. Residents not ready for a skyline on the Ewa Plain should look at the view from H-1 and see if there is anything of interest. Imaginative architects could make high-rises objects of admiration. D.R. Horton's profits may be reduced with fewer houses and more condominiums – along with its research contribution to increase yields per acre – but there will still be a substantial return on investment.

Those who have experienced city life know that West Kapolei is suburban, not urban. Local elected officials (in their 30s through 60s) have shown no vision. I have written elsewhere about the concepts of UH graduate architecture students for East Kapolei. Those of us in our 70s hope these 20-somethings will see their ideas come to life in a true city center of themed

zones such as university, ethnic, arts and entertainment — our residents' Waikiki.

The key to making East Kapolei something better than the "strip mall" to the west is the center point between UH-West Oahu and Ho'opili. Rather than the planned station, a major terminal can be sited among the high-rises, a transit-oriented development primarily privately funded for rights to retail operations. Federal and local governments can help with public elements (e.g., auditorium, post office, offices, multistory garage). State land on the UH side of the North-South Road can include high-rises, with the state compensating D.R. Horton for farmland remaining in the east and the developer helping fund the new campus.

Finally, visualize a mag-lev gliding quietly through East Kapolei high-rises, carrying people who have regained "quality of life" hours lost in their current road commutes. I'd better close; the men in white coats want me back in my padded cell.

-----Original Message-----

From: Luden, Hymie (FTA)

Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 11:46 AM

Subject: FTA article: Honolulu's EIS, technology and procurements should have been better